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ABSTRACT

A practicum project was designed to improve awareness among county residents of the needs of the county's children and families generally, and of the work of a county board governing a taxing district for children's services, specifically. The objective of the project was to alleviate misunderstanding about the nature of and the need for the Board's work at a time when a "no new taxes" attitude prevailed. The project developed and produced for cable television broadcast a public/government access television program that featured the work of the Board through discussion of issues related to children and families. The program was aired three times daily by the county government access channel, and twice weekly by the cable company that helped produce it and by the other major cable company serving the county. Results of audience estimates and pre- and post-broadcast surveys indicated that the cable television show reached a larger proportion of county residents than the Board alone could reach, that the show permitted in-depth discussion of issues over a sustained period of time, that it allowed the Board to maintain control of the intended message, and that the program increased dramatically the number of times the Board was mentioned in the media. Although there was an improvement in measures of changed awareness among the evaluation group, the change was not as great as anticipated. The survey instrument is appended. (Author/HTH)

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Improving Awareness of Youth and Family Issues Through a Public Access, Cable Television Program

by

Kate Howze

Cluster 40

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A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

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This practicum report was submitted by Kate Howze under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

Feb. 24 1993
Date of Final
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ABSTRACT

Improving Awareness of Youth and Family Issues Through a Public Access, Cable Television Program. Howze, Kate, 1993: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Public Relations/Human Services/Public Opinion/Public Support/Social Attitudes/Public Affairs Education/Community Relations/Community Attitudes/Attitude Change/Media/Broadcast Media/Cable Television

This practicum was designed to improve awareness among county residents of the needs of the county's children and families, generally, and of the work of the writer's Board, an independent special taxing district dedicated to children's services, specifically. The writer believed improved awareness would help alleviate misunderstanding about the nature of and the need for the Board's work at a time when a "no new taxes" mentality prevailed.

The writer developed and produced for cable TV airing a public/government access television program which featured the work of the Board through discussion of issues related to children and families. The program was developed as a community service by one of the two major cable TV companies serving the writer's county. It was aired three times daily by the county government access channel, and twice weekly by the cable company which helped produce it and by the other major cable company serving the county.

Results indicated that the cable TV show reached a larger proportion of county residents, that it permitted in-depth discussion of issues over a sustained period of time, that it allowed the Board to maintain control of the intended message, and that it tremendously increased the number of times the Board was mentioned in the media. While there was improvement in measures of changed awareness among an evaluation group, the change was not as great as was hoped.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community and Work Setting

This practicum took place within a large, geographically-widespread, urban county in a rapidly-growing state. The county contains 25 municipalities and unincorporated areas, and has 851,103 residents. Nearly 156,000 of these residents are children under 18 (Florida Center for Children and Youth, 1990). Despite a per capita personal income in the county of $19,317 in 1988, one in seven children lives in poverty. Of the families who live in poverty, more than half are female-headed, single-parent households. One of every four county households is a single-parent family. A little more than 9% of the population is non-white (Shermyen, 1990; Social Indicator Report, 1988). Over the past 10 years, the median age in the county dropped from 45.8 to 42.1, affirming planners' predictions that the county is shedding its image as a "retirement" community (Adair, 1990).

Even though the county's population has always been predominantly older, the focus on children and families is strong (Rudd, 1980). The county is the site of the nation's first, independent, special taxing district dedicated to children's services. The district, governed by a Board, is the concrete result of the vision of a small group of county

residents who, in the mid-1940s, became concerned about the lack of resources for children. The group, led by an attorney and juvenile court judge, drafted legislation to the State Legislature, which passed it in a few short months. In 1946, the county's voters approved the district, thus empowering the Board to assess ad valorem property tax up to a half-mill cap.

In a referendum held in September of 1990, county voters approved an increase in the Board's taxing authority cap, permitting assessment of up to 1 mill ($1 per $1,000 of taxable property value).

Writer's Work Setting and Role

With its tax revenue, the Board contracts with agencies and programs to provide services to the county's children and families. During the most recent fiscal year, the Board allocated $15.6-million through contracts with 41 agencies and 83 programs. The Board's funding decisions are guided by a community-wide needs assessment and fall into 17 areas. While dedicated to children's services, the Board believes it impossible and undesirable to address children's needs separate from the family's. So the 17 need areas include many programs and services designed to make the family healthy and functioning. The Board has divided all 17 need areas into four priorities. The Board's programs are designed to focus on prevention and early intervention.

In addition to contracting for services, the Board's staff monitors and evaluates these services; plans and

coordinates services; conducts research on topics relating to children and families, and provides social indicator data to the community; offers varied training and enrichment opportunities for human service professionals; maintains a library of books and audio-visual materials; reviews and recommends legislative and public policies relating to children and families, and engages in advocacy activities; and promotes community awareness and understanding of the needs of the county's children and families. It is this last function that is the primary responsibility of the writer, who is the Board's Community Relations Director.

The writer and the other department managers report directly to the Executive Director, and form his policy-advising and management "cabinet." The Board has 46 administrative employees.

The writer has been employed by the Board since 1989. Her primary responsibilities are to promote broad public understanding and awareness of the needs of children and of the purpose, function and activities of the Board (see Appendix A). The main functions of the department are defined as public information and education, volunteer coordination, maintenance of a speaker's bureau, and provision of public relations technical assistance to the agencies with which the Board contracts.

In practice, technical assistance to agencies, maintenance of the speaker's bureau and volunteer coordination are a small part of the overall operation of the department. Public information and education are the

largest part. Since the writer's Board is a governmental agency, public information and education must be nonpartial. Stories are not "pitched" to one media preferentially, for example. If a release of information is made, it is done on an equal basis to all media in the county. In this important aspect, the writer's duties differ from those of a more traditional public relations practitioner, who has more flexibility in promoting a specific message.

There are two daily newspapers serving the county, one located within the county, the other in a neighboring county. The neighboring county paper has an entire, separate section devoted to news of the writer's county. There are 14 weekly newspapers and one legal journal in the county. Three network-affiliated broadcast television stations and three independent broadcast television stations serve the regional area. There are two major and one minor cable television station companies serving the county, two public broadcasting television stations, and 38 radio stations.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Creating and maintaining awareness among county residents of youth and family issues, and of the work of the Board, had spotty emphasis during the Board's 46-year existence (James E. Mills, personal conversation, 6 March 1989). During its formative years, the Board enjoyed positive media attention because it was new. County residents, who overwhelmingly supported the concept in the referendum empowering the Board, generally supported its initial efforts. Three factors affected on-going community awareness of youth and family issues and the work of the Board:

1. The county grew from a population of 85,184 when the Board was formed (Rudd, 1980) to its near-million population at the time of this practicum.

2. A mobile society created a constant flux of residents.

3. The county grew in popularity as a part-time home to many residents due to its climate, location, and attraction as a tourist destination.

For these three reasons, it became increasingly difficult to maintain community awareness of the Board and of youth and family issues. As well, under previous

executive directors, the Board kept a low profile regarding community awareness (Brock, 1987). The Board was content with recognition by other public and private groups that dealt with children.

When the current Executive Director was hired in 1983, he encouraged more active pursuit of community awareness (Brock, 1987). Legislation in 1986 permitting formation of similar boards throughout the State drew attention to the writer's Board. Increased sensitivity to taxes on the national level caused the Board to question on-going local support of its taxing authority. And reduced funding of social service programs on the national level placed the Board in the public eye as an alternative funding source.

In addition to these factors, active pursuit of community awareness became even more desirable as the Board approached its millage authority cap, with voter approval necessary for an increase in the cap. In 1990, the Board placed a referendum on the ballot to do so. The writer was engaged in public information activities solely related to youth and family issues, and to the work of the Board, in the three months preceding the referendum. On Sept. 4, 1990, 82,384 county residents, or 67% of the 122,962 county residents who voted on the referendum, approved an increase in the Board's taxing authority cap.

While this outcome was positive, it may have been due in part to the activities of a political action committee that targeted voters. The writer had learned during the three months of public information activities that awareness

of youth and family issues and of the Board was marginal. As well, the referendum outcome reflected the wishes of those who voted in favor of the referendum, who represented only 17% of the county's 486,610 registered voters, and a little more than 9% of the county's total population of 851,103.

In the year and a half since the referendum, up to the time of this practicum, the nation's economy worsened, heightening a "no new taxes" mentality in the writer's county and throughout the country. Budget cuts on the State level seriously affected services and programs for children and families throughout the State, including in the writer's county. The Board believed it must administer the increased taxes as it promised county voters before the referendum and assist, where appropriate, county programs and services affected by State budget cuts. Yet county residents were among those who wished no more taxes, and some indicated that wish to the Board through Truth in Millage (TRIM) hearings.

Increased taxes rarely are popular, but they become even less popular when county residents do not understand what the taxes are used for or why expenditures for youth and families are necessary. Poor awareness among county residents of the work of the Board, specifically, and the needs of the county's children and families, generally, created such misunderstanding.

Problem Documentation

In 1987, the Community Planning and Development Department of the Board, with the assistance of a respected marketing research organization in the county, conducted a "Community Awareness and Attitudes Toward Supporting Children's Services with Tax Dollars: Marketing Survey" (1987). The purpose was to determine county residents' level of knowledge about the Board, to assess their attitudes toward tax dollars being used for children's services, and to recommend marketing strategies for enhancing the Board's community image.

For the report, 505 telephone surveys were completed. Issues focused on the respondent's opinions of the Board, of the community's knowledge of and attitudes about human services in the State, and of taxation for children's services. There were eight items on the survey and response choices varied. Some items required a "yes" or "no" response, others were multiple choice, and others were open-ended. Respondents were chosen at random and were demographically representative of the county.

The awareness survey showed that half of the respondents had heard of the Board, but that those who had heard of the Board were largely unfamiliar with the agency's functions. However, 84% of the respondents favored spending property taxes for children's services.

Progress on recommendations resulting from the survey was hampered by frequent turnover in the Community Relations Director position. Midway through the survey in 1987, a new

Community Relations Director was hired, followed by another in 1988 and the writer in 1989.

Early in 1991, the writer conducted a strategic planning process for the Community Relations Department (see Appendix B). The resulting plan found that the Community Relations Department was instrumental in informing the public, the Board's committees and agencies, the media, and the Board staff of issues related to the Board specifically, and of issues related to children in general. But it found that the department did not fully fulfill its public accountability function.

Late in 1991, the Board was instrumental in conducting in the county one of 11 early intervention and prevention forums held throughout the State at the Governor's request. The forum was attended by 200 early childhood, human services and education professionals, who worked in nine groups to make recommendations for public policy. Seven of the nine groups recommended community awareness activities or special informational efforts to improve public understanding of issues affecting children and families in the county.

On the national level, the nonpartisan Coalition for America's Children studied why, despite widely published statistics regarding the status of America's children, there was no widespread cry for improving that status ("For voters," 1992). The group identified seven reasons why voters do not demonstrate their concerns for children at the polls. The reasons included: 1) ignorance of children's

issues; 2) location of responsibility for solving problems with the family, not government; 3) a belief that children's programs equal welfare; 4) a resistance to tax increases; 5) no confidence in government to do the right thing for children; 6) a belief that kids have no clout; and 7) lack of a clear set of demands.

Causative Analysis

The writer believed there were four causes for poor awareness among county residents of the work of the Board, specifically, and of youth and family issues, generally. The first was that existing public information activities reached a limited proportion of the county population.

The five objectives listed in the Community Relations Media Policy (see Appendix C) indicated the importance of media relations to the work of the Board. But the influence of media relations activities was limited.

The most frequently utilized method of media relations was press releases. Board releases were distributed to daily and weekly publications with circulations ranging from a few hundred to an average daily circulation in the county of 244,809. Releases also were distributed to area television stations, but potential viewership of these stations was difficult to guage without knowing specific time and day of placement of stories. Typically, television relies upon Nielsen or Arbitron ratings, which measure viewership for a specific program or programs.

Distribution of a release does not assume use by the medium receiving the release, nor does it imply use in the form in which the release is sent. And since not every subscriber reads every article, or since not every television viewer watches every broadcast, potential audience reached may be fewer than the combined circulation totals of all publications, or projected viewership of all television stations, might indicate.

The other major community awareness activity of the Community Relations Department was public education, which typically occurred through presentations to clubs and community groups. The department averaged two presentations a month, to groups averaging 25 people in size. Information imparted in this fashion also reached a limited proportion of the population.

Other forms in which the Community Relations Department publicized the work of the Board included an annual report, small brochures, and special informational campaigns. These activities reached specific, targeted audiences rather than the community at large, and often had specific, focused messages.

The writer believed the second cause for poor awareness among county residents of the work of the Board, specifically, and of youth and family issues, generally, was that current and accepted public relations practices did not provide in-depth discussion of issues. As mentioned above, press releases sent to publications may not be used in their entirety. Should a release be utilized by television,

chances are it results in a 10-second "bite." Use in a printed publication may be equally as brief. Occasionally a neighborhood shopper or give-away publication used a complete Board release, but even then the result was brief since Board releases typically were no longer than two double-spaced, typewritten pages. Presentations to clubs generally were about 20 minutes long. The annual report and other informational campaigns reached highly specific audiences with focused, targeted messages. Therefore, no method in use by the Board at the time of this practicum allowed for significant exploration of issues or of the Board's work.

The writer believed the third cause for poor awareness among county residents of the work of the Board, specifically, and of youth and family issues, generally, was that sporadic and brief local media attention was given to issues affecting children and families. Because so many items compete for presentation in daily newspapers and on television, and because media are competitive among themselves, the "hot" news item is the one that gets the play. A news item or even a news trends is only as durable as the emergence of the next item or trend. For example, during the month preceding the Board's millage cap referendum, there were 20 newspaper articles that specifically mentioned the Board, and four television broadcasts. In the same month the next year, there were only eight newspaper mentions and no television broadcasts that mentioned the Board.

Finally, the writer believed the fourth cause for poor awareness among county residents of the work of the Board, specifically, and of youth and family issues, generally, was that the Board did not fully utilized its unique position to serve as a catalyst for increasing community awareness. As mentioned above, the Board maintained a low profile for a long period of time. Not only did it not call attention to itself, it also did not promote attention to youth and family issues. As a unique organization and as a funding body within its community, the Board could serve as a source of information. Early in 1992, a community planning group studying the future of the Board decided that not only could the Board serve as a source of information, but that it should do so (Report of the Planning Work Group, 1992). Among 15 strategies designed to implement the revised Goals and Operating Principles that the group developed for the Board was:

> Work even more actively with the media to better inform and educate the community regarding human service/family needs and new and emerging ways of addressing the needs. Identify and provide new means to communicate directly or through agencies and community groups the needs, capabilities, and accomplishments of human services. (p. 12)

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

There is no lack of information and advice on just exactly what a public information/public relations program should be. But generally this advice is couched in global terms such as "establish a good working relationship with the media." Certainly no one can quarrel with that directive, but translation of such a directive into situationally-specific practice is not always provided. Likewise, a review of why things were not going exactly right, or how things might be improved, also was somewhat global. But the review provided some insight into the situation experienced by the Board.

Brawley and Martinez-Brawley (1982) believe some of the reasons that the social services have not fully utilized the media are lack of skills and techniques for approaching and using the media, and fear about "going public." Consequently, social service providers may find themselves in a defensive posture when things go wrong, rather than being in the enviable position of initiating news coverage. Dealing with the media when things go wrong also results in social service providers perceiving the media as aggressive, harsh, and not at all amenable to the messages that social service providers might like to see covered in the media.

Another reason that social service providers have been slow to recognize the contribution that the mass media can make to their goals and activities is that major initiatives in this area can be quite costly (Brawley, 1987). Given the overall impact of existing and worsening budget constraints

on human services, social service providers have not fully examined the use of creative programming in community education through the mass media.

Also problematic is lack of information on the effectiveness and efficacy of public information practices, creative or not. In a report to the 1982 National Conference on Social Welfare, reprinted in part in the American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, Brawley and Martinez-Brawley (1984) note the difficulty of evaluating the effectiveness of mass media efforts, thus making justification of on-going or increased efforts difficult.

Justification for fiscal and personnel resources expended on public information activities is especially important to nonprofit agencies and governmental agencies such as the Board. Therefore, it might be expected that the public information methods chosen by these groups are ones that maximize effort at minimal cost.

A survey by Rouner and Camden (1990) indicates that might not be the case. Rouner and Camden surveyed 105 nonprofit organizations in metropolitan Cleveland to learn about how they used communications to get their messages across. The organizations reported a variety of methods, including methods used by the Board. But the authors conclude that many nonprofits are not using numerous opportunities that are available at low or no cost, even though these organizations are the ones who are most likely to benefit.

In the absence of creative and/or minimal-cost public relations efforts, most nonprofits or governmental agencies rely upon more standard methods of communication, such as press releases and press conferences. But this dependence upon the media to perform in a public service role also is problematic. According to Wells (1972), social service organizations cannot depend upon the public service function of the media since broadcasting and newspaper publishing are typically business enterprises interested in profits as opposed to public interest.

Even the media who perform a public service function may do so selectively. Berkowitz (1989) studied agenda-building in local TV news, or the process by which news sources provide information to journalists, and journalists draw news stories from information provided. Using a network-affiliate television news department in Indianapolis over a four-week period, Berkowitz examined information that was discarded and information that was kept for future use. (Information kept was not necessarily used on a news cast.) Among other findings, the analysis showed that 66% of information from nonprofit organizations and 84% of information from governmental or political organizations was discarded. The promising part of Berkowitz's results was that despite the seemingly low retention of information from nonprofits, information from that category was retained more often than information from interest groups, education, business or governmental/political groups. Information from

governmental/political organizations was retained least often.

The review of the literature indicated five possible causes that related to the practicum problem: cost of public relations/public information efforts, lack of information on the effectiveness of such efforts, lack of creativity in pursuing alternative, low-cost methods, undependability of the media in using information supplied, and selectivity of the media in using the materials that are supplied. All of these factors, some in greater degree than others, had impact upon the practicum problem.

The writer believed the problem might have been caused by existing public information activities that reached only a limited proportion of the population. It was possible that these activities were cost-effective but not effective in terms of results. As well, the writer was not aware of any evaluation of the efforts except for the previously-mentioned market survey. The undependability of the media and selectivity of the media directly related to the writer's belief that the practicum problem was caused by sporadic and brief local media attention given to issues affecting children and families, and to the shallow discussion of issues. And the lack of creativity in seeking innovative, low-cost public information methods related directly to the writer's belief that the Board had not fully utilized its unique position to serve as a catalyst for increasing community awareness.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

Upon completing this practicum, the writer hoped to have improved awareness among county residents of the needs of the county's children and families, generally, and of the work of the Board, specifically. The writer believed improved awareness would help alleviate misunderstanding about the nature of and need for the Board's work at a time when a "no new taxes" mentality predominated.

Expected Outcomes

The following goals and outcomes were projected for this practicum:

1. A larger proportion of the county population will receive information on the writer's Board and on the needs of the county's children and families. This will be measured by routine exposure of an audience of up to 50,000 county residents to information about the writer's Board and about the needs of the county's children and families. Success will be considered to be weekly exposure to the audience, which will be documented through accepted media audience auditing methods.

2. The Board will serve as a catalyst for increasing awareness of its work and of issues involving children and

families. Success will be considered to be an increase of 10 per month in the number of media mentions generated by the Board's Community Relations Director.

3. Awareness of youth and family issues, and of the Board's work, will be improved through implementation of a public information method that devotes a significant amount of time to issues over a sustained period of time, defined as the duration of this practicum. Success will be measured by 50% improvement in the self-report scores of awareness of youth and family issues by 10 citizens who are demographically representative of the county's population.

Measurement of Outcomes

The National Institutes of Health (1989) published a comprehensive report, Making Health Communication Programs Work: A Planner's Guide, which contains valuable guidelines on planning and measuring the results of a public information practice or campaign. The recommendations are easily translated for use with social issues; public information methods and campaigns for both health and social issues often rely upon intangible outcomes, such as change in thinking or change in behavior.

According to the National Institutes of Health (1989), measurement of change that occurs as a result of a public information campaign or method can be accomplished in two ways. The first is by looking at how the program operates. The second is by looking at its effect. Measuring how the program operates can be done by tracking the number of

materials distributed or articles printed, for example. Measuring the effect of a program usually involves comparing the target audience's awareness, attitudes and/or behavior before and after the program. By combining the two measures, information can be obtained not only on what happened, but why it happened. The writer proposed to measure results of the practicum using both these methods.

Measurement of Outcome 1 was designed to provide information on what happened. This measurement involved securing the necessary commitments to provide exposure on a weekly basis over at least a six-month period, and documenting the size of the audience reached. In media programming or planning, a time period of six months or a year generally is considered reasonable for instituting new projects. A shorter time period does not allow enough time, and a longer time period makes a commitment that may later be regretted. As well, development of such a project requires planning and evaluation, thus making an overall investment of at least eight months. An eight-month period was chosen for this project since it provided a reasonable time frame in which to work and measure the results without prematurely engaging the resources of the writer or her Board in a longterm commitment.

Documentation of the audience size of Outcome 1 depended on the media chosen as the solution. Documentation could have been number of subscribers (print or cable television), number of names on mailing lists (targeted mailing), Nielsen or Arbitron ratings (broadcast

television), Arbitron ratings (radio broadcasts), or another indicator.

The media for this project was cable television. Therefore, documentation of Outcome 1 was to be the number of subscribers to the two cable television companies serving the county. The subscribers were to be analyzed in terms of potential audience reached, using published research. While more definitive measures were desirable, it is impossible to know exactly who is reading or watching what, and when, without costly evaluation measures.

Outcome 2 also was designed to provide information on what happened. It was to be measured by a comparison of the amount of media exposure during the solution implementation period to the amount of media exposure in the same period prior to solution implementation. This comparison was to be completed by counting the number of media articles and radio and television broadcasts that specifically mention the Board during the two periods. Success was to be considered an increase of 10 per month in the number of times the Board was mentioned during the implementation period as compared to the period prior to implementation.

Outcome 3 was designed to provide information on the practicum's effect by measuring changes in awareness of youth and family issues, and of the Board's work, over the period of the practicum. In its report on making health communications work, the National Institutes of Health (1989) describe a variety of ways to measure short-term results of awareness efforts. These are an activity

assessment (how many people are doing what the program is designed to encourage them to do); periodic calculation of the percentage of the target audience that is aware of the program; and pre-test and post-test of change in audience awareness.

The pre-test and post-test of change in audience awareness provided the most reasonable method of documenting change for Outcome 3. The writer was to measure change in awareness of youth and family issues among a group of citizens whose awareness levels were ascertained before and after implementation. Awareness levels were to be measured by a self-report survey adapted for use by the writer (see Appendix D).

This survey was based upon work by Nowak and Salmon (1987), who studied the measurement of involvement with social issues. The researchers believe that, for both mass communications and for consumer research, it is the issue of involvement that determines how the individual processes information to arrive at a final action or decision. Nowak and Salmon synthesized research on consumer product involvement and applied it to social issues. They then measured the statistical significance of the instrument they developed. It provided to have high overall validity.

The self-report survey (see Appendix D) for this practicum used Nowak and Salmon's (1987) model to ascertain awareness levels in three areas: on issues relating to children, on issues relating to families, and on issues relating to the writer's Board. The form was quick and easy

to complete. Responses carried no numerical weight that was evident to the respondents. For analysis purposes, the writer was to assign numerical weights to responses, with a numerical weight of five given to responses considered desirable or favorable, and a weight of one given to responses considered undesirable or unfavorable. Each of the three issues had 10 possible responses. Therefore, a respondent's social issue involvement score on each issue could range from 10 to 50, with a total overall score range of from 30 to 150.

The writer was to choose a group of 10 citizens who represented a demographic mix of the county. The group was to be surveyed prior to solution implementation, and then asked to attend to the public information method determined to best resolve the practicum problem. Following the specified period of implementation, the group was to be surveyed again. Success would be considered to be a 50% improvement in overall self-report awareness scores.

Mechanism for Recording Unexpected Events

The writer maintained a portfolio of practicum activity so that unexpected events would be recorded. The portfolio contained an anecdotal log as well as all pertinent memos and documents relating to practicum implementation. This portfolio permitted mid-course corrections, if necessary, and provided additional material for analyzing practicum results. The writer also asked five other citizens who were not members of the pretest/posttest group to provide interim

feedback on a monthly basis using a report form suggested by the National Institutes of Health and adapted for use by the writer (see Appendix E). This way, the project was developed with the help of citizen input.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

As detailed in previous chapters, the writer was faced with the need to improve awareness among county residents of youth and family issues, in general, and the work of the writer's Board, in particular. This practicum goal was to be accomplished by using a public information method or methods that reached a larger proportion of the county population, provided in-depth discussion of issues, and permitted the Board to utilize its position in the community to serve as a catalyst for improving awareness.

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

A review of the literature showed that others have faced similar problems and have found solutions that helped to increase community awareness. These solutions tended to group around two philosophies. The first advocates a well-rounded public relations plan with a diversity of activities; the second suggests creative use of alternative resources and low-cost, effective public relations methods.

Espousing the first philosophy, Harrison (1991) suggests that a well-structured public relations program that places the organization in the public eye is the most effective way of gaining public awareness. In outlining six public relations trends shaping the future of nonprofits,

Harrison discusses organizational visibility as imperative, not just desirable. It is necessary for nonprofits to shape the way the public and key audiences think about an organization and its issue or cause. Harrison believes this shaping of public opinion is best accomplished by a diversity of public relations techniques, including TV, radio, newspaper and magazine interviews; news conferences; letters to the editor; and opinion pieces on important issues. Harrison also urges use of special events and speaking engagements to position the organization's leaders as "experts" in the public's opinion.

Rouner and Camden (1990) mention many of the same methods as Harrison, but emphasize that a theme carried out over time to identified and targeted publics is crucial to an effective program. Evaluation is a key part of this type of program, since it permits interaction between the organization and the community, thus enhancing the effectiveness of public relations efforts. Acknowledging that planned campaigns with evaluation components can be cost-prohibitive, especially for nonprofits, Rouner and Camden suggest that such organizations utilize community resources available at low or no cost. These resources include clubs and organizations, board members, volunteers, friends, students, ad agencies, public relations agencies, photographers and print shops.

In writing on how nonprofit organizations can maintain communications programs when budgets are tight, Ott (1990) leans toward traditional public relations efforts as

justification. She suggests that the fact that media coverage is always perceived as more legitimate than advertising emphasizes the need to deliver a credible message through planned communications. In addition to creating a work plan, prioritizing the contents of the plan and clarifying time use, Ott espouses exploring other resources, including the use of college interns, volunteers, and pro bono services of trade associations, local businesses, current donors, ad agencies and public relations firms.

Ott also has suggestions that represent creative use of alternative resources and low-cost, effective public relations methods, providing an introduction to the second public relations "philosophy" area revealed by the literature search. These suggestions include smaller, more targeted direct mailings, tip sheets instead of press releases, and tie-ins with organizations sharing common goals. Ott believes a method that lends itself to being reused is particularly cost-effective.

Several authors offer specific methods for improving awareness that are creative and usually low cost. McGowan (1990), for example, believes that public service announcements offer a unique opportunity for nonprofits to promote their message or issue. The time devoted to public service announcements (PSAs) on radio and/or TV may be free, but the organization may have to use special knowledge and techniques for a PSA to be truly effective and cost-efficient in its production. McGowan believes solicitation

of in-kind contributions to be the most cost-efficient and cost-effective way for organizations to take advantage of available public service broadcast time.

Belknap (1990) also espouses the use of video, because video shows the viewer the message rather than telling the viewer the message. Rather than place this message on TV or radio, though, Belknap suggests preparation of an organizational video that is then used for club meetings, employee recruitment, community events, fairs and displays. While prepared only once, the video is reused again and again to maintain a positive image for the organization, attract people to the organization, and maintain supporters for the organization.

The literature search revealed some interesting writings by Brawley (1983 and 1987), who believes that the practice of social work has much to gain from creative use of public relations activities. In addition to routine media activities such as news releases to local newspapers and broadcast stations, Brawley suggests use of prepared articles and appearances on radio and TV talk shows. From this rather conventional approach to public relations/information, Brawley then steps forward to urge some innovative methods for public information, especially as they concern the field of social work. Specifically, he mentions use of public access cable television.

The National Association of Social Workers (1983) reports on a group of social workers in northeastern Connecticut who developed a twice-weekly television show

aired on the public access channel of the local cable TV system. The social workers were able to let people know what services were available and maintain control of the message from start to finish, including producing the show. In a letter to the editor of NASW News, Gullotta (1983) urges other social service providers to work with cable TV franchises to provide public information on services and issues.

Finally, a review of the literature would have been incomplete without recommendations for improved community awareness that specifically related to the writer's Board. These recommendations were made as a result of the previously-mentioned "Community Awareness and Attitudes Toward Supporting Children's Services With Tax Dollars: Marketing Survey" (1987), and the Community Relations Strategic Plan (see Appendix B).

Recommendations for improved awareness that resulted from the marketing survey included the following:

1. Inform the community on State low spending levels on human services and repercussions of low-level spending.
2. Develop and implement a strategic plan for the Community Relations Department.
3. Use market development strategies (inform new audiences) and market penetration strategies (emphasize the same message to the same audience).
4. Proceed with caution and assess public response on a regular basis.

5. Use several messages, depending on the audience.
6. Educate the community as to expenditures of their tax dollars.

The Strategic Plan developed for Community Relations (see Appendix B) called for increased accountability to the public by expansion of Community Relations activities. The plan called for maintenance of existing activities, such as press releases, public speaking engagements, annual report production and special information campaigns, but recommended dissemination of information to broader audiences in a more in-depth manner.

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

The literature review provided a rich overview of effective and cost-considerate measures for increasing public awareness. But when the parameters for this practicum were matched against suggested solutions, a specific method became clear.

The two approaches that the literature review revealed as suggested practice were first, a well-rounded public relations plan with a diversity of activities; and second, the creative use of alternative resources and low-cost, effective public relations methods. The writer already utilized a well-rounded public relations plan with diverse activities. These activities included press releases, special publications, news conferences, public speaking engagements, radio and television talk show appearances, and special informational and public service campaigns. The

writer also creatively used alternative resources and low-cost, public relations methods. For example, the pro bono services of an advertising agency were engaged for a special public service campaign in 1991. And for other projects, partners are found who can bring either financial or in-kind resources to a specific project.

Therefore, there were many solutions identified by the literature that the writer's department had already tried or that were currently being used. There was one suggestion from the literature review that the writer had not tried, and which had the potential for satisfying the outcomes delineated for this practicum. That suggestion was a public access, cable television program. Pairing that suggestion with others from literature provided a comfortable fit with the outcomes desired from this practicum.

The writer believed such a program would allow the Board to reach a larger proportion of the county population, to serve as a catalyst for increasing awareness of its work and of issues facing children and families, and to devote a significant amount of time to issues over a sustained period of time.

The method could help position the Board as an "expert" on issues relating to children and families, thus reinforcing the Board as a competent administrator of public funds for children. By maintaining the responsibility for the program, the Board could help shape the message provided to the audience rather than rely upon traditional media. Providing the show on a theme over a period would help

reinforce the message. And finally, the chosen method could be accomplished at low or no cost and involve the resources of other individuals and community groups. All of these suggestions were shown by the literature review to be desirable.

The author believed the potential audience that could be reached by this public information method was sizable. Atkin and LaRose (1988) provide information on how many cable television subscribers watch public access television, based on a survey of respondents drawn from a systematic sample of 100 cable systems throughout the country. The researchers found that 16% of the overall audience reported viewing a community channel within the past week. However, they caution that the percentage level should be considered in light of seasonal viewing fluctuations. As well, the comparative data is based on 1985-86 viewership levels, and public access programming has increased in popularity since then.

Continued insight into public access viewership is provided by Banks and Porter (1987), who studied how public access television was perceived in the Milwaukee area by surveying 226 respondents. The researchers anticipated that awareness of public access would be lower than the findings demonstrated (52% of respondents were aware of public or community access on cable). Those who were aware of public access tended to perceive it favorably; they considered the programming to be informative, creative and varied. However, the researchers found that positive perceptions do not

always translate into viewership over the long term, especially if public access programs are dull or filled with a lot of "talk."

Sparkes (1979) also notes that reaching an audience does not equate with keeping or holding an audience. To do that, Sparkes believes public access programming must provide breadth and depth, and that those with relevant messages reach their constituent publics. That was the intent of Outcomes 2 and 3.

A public access, cable television program produced by the writer would provide the means to reach a large group of county residents. As well, public access programming would permit in-depth exploration of issues which can be sustained over a significant period of time. Therefore, it was a method that responded to the three outcomes outlined for this practicum.

It was clear from the literature review that simply producing a public access, cable television program with "talking heads" would neither attract nor hold viewers. As well, a program of this type would do little to encourage attention to issues or promote the Board's willingness to serve as a catalyst to make the community aware of issues. It would be necessary for the cable TV show designed for this practicum to be innovative, creative and relatively low cost. The writer also was appreciative of the idea of "shotgun" programming: If one show on a specific day at a specific time doesn't reach someone, broadcasting that show over a variety of time slots and days might increase the

chances of it being seen and the message reinforced. Therefore, the writer would endeavor to have the Board's show broadcast by both cable television companies on at least two different days and times, and also have the show broadcast by county government access television, which broadens potential viewership even further.

The program designed for this practicum solution was to focus on issues relating to children and families, using the agencies funded by the Board to explain the issues. At the same time, mention of the agency as Board-funded would help the audience connect the Board's work with the needs of children and families.

The needs were to be handled in the same manner as the Board decides funding requests, and that was by priority area determined by community Coordinated Needs Assessment (1986). Data on the needs of children and families used for the program were to be drawn either from the Coordinated Needs Assessment or from the social indicator data base maintained by the Board. Using locally-defined needs information and local data would provide relevance for viewers, especially those whose tax dollars support the work of the Board.

By formatting the program in this manner, it would be possible to address all the factors noted by the Coalition for America's Children ("For voters," 1992) as impeding citizen demand for improvement in the status of children. Ignorance of issues would be addressed through provision of information, location of responsibility through explanation

of the Board's responsibilities, a belief that children's programs equal welfare through demonstration of Board program applicability to all people, resistance to tax increases through demonstration of successful application of tax dollars, no confidence in government through Board work that instills confidence, a belief that kids have no clout through advocacy on behalf of children, and lack of a clear set of demands through focus on vital issues affecting the children and families of the community.

Report of Action Taken

Securing Program Agreements:

The first step in this practicum involved securing the agreement of the two major cable franchises serving the county, and the agreement of the government access channel, to air the program for at least a six-month period.

The two cable companies operate in the writer's county under different franchise agreements. Company A is franchised with the city in which the writer's organization is located, and Company B is franchised primarily with the county commission, and secondarily with two municipalities in the upper part of the county. Franchise agreements may contain provisions for "access" programming - public access, educational access and government access. Access programming provides the opportunity for the public and educational and governmental organizations to produce and place programs on cable TV. Because governing bodies have the discretion to make their own franchise agreements, public access,

reserved for all local programming which is not produced through the public access program.

For this practicum, the writer believed it more expedient to interest Company A in providing the program as a community service than to engage in a 10-week TV production course and be at the mercy of a volunteer crew. Producing the show this way would not preclude its airing on Company B's local origination channel or on the government access channel. However, permission would need to be obtained from the county government's public information office to air the show on the government access channel of both cable companies.

The writer made an appointment with the production manager of the first cable company. Previously, under a different production manager, this company had indicated interest in airing a show produced by the writer. The writer hoped the present manager also would be interested in airing a show. At the meeting, the manager agreed to air the show and to provide four hours' worth of employee time to videotape "in the field" (on site as opposed to in the studio) and four hours' worth of employee time to tape in the studio and edit the entire program. While not explicitly stated, this "donation" of air time and of production time was given as a community service.

This agreement meant that the program defined by this practicum would air on the local origination channel of Company A. The writer then contacted the local origination coordinator of Company B to ask if that company would air

the show if a dubbed tape were provided. The coordinator agreed to place the show on the local origination channel. The county public information director was then contacted. She agreed to air the show pending a review of its proposed content and format, which was provided by letter. Company A, Company B and government access all agreed to a six-month program airing period, if not longer.

Determination of Resources:

The next step after securing agreements to air a monthly show was to determine what would be needed in order to produce the show as defined. Cable Company A had agreed to provide four hours' field videotaping time and four hours' combination editing/studio time. At this point in the practicum, it appeared that the major investment of resources for the project would be the time spent by the writer and by a part-time assistant in planning, scheduling and using the time donated by Company A. It was anticipated that some money would need to be spent to produce an opening for the show, the funds for which would come out of the writer's departmental budget. As will be explained shortly, additional resources were added to the practicum by the writer's organization upon her recommendation. These resources included a high-quality, super VHS camcorder; two portable lights; and a hand-held microphone.

Evaluation:

For Outcomes 1 and 2, the next steps were to determine the size of the audience that could potentially be reached by the TV show, and to collect media mentions in the period

before implementation. As mentioned previously, audience size in broadcast television can be determined by Nielsen or Arbitron ratings. Cable television is not monitored by Nielsen or Arbitron. Because cable television is a private industry, results of any survey of audience size are known only to the various cable companies able to pay the cost of conducting such surveys. Neither Cable Company A nor Cable Company B have conducted such surveys (Terry Zurowski, personal conversation, 17 June 1992).

The closest estimate to audience size that could be obtained for this practicum was to secure the number of subscribers to Cable Company A and to Cable Company B, a total of 237,000. Implications and interpretations of this number will be discussed in Chapter V. Collection of media mentions was accomplished by analyzing newspaper clippings and radio and broadcast mentions in the six months preceding practicum implementation.

For Outcome 3, the next step in the practicum was to engage a group of 10 citizens demographically representative of the county's population. This group was to be pre-tested on awareness of youth and family issues, and on the Board's work, view six shows produced for this practicum, and then be post-tested. Changes in awareness would be determined.

The county's population at the time of this practicum was 90.5% white, 9.5% non-white, 47% male and 53% female. Of the total population, 15% were ages 0 to 14, 39% ages 15 to 44, 20% ages 45 to 64, and 26% 65 and older. Applying these percentages to the target number of 10 evaluation group

members yielded a demographically representative group. The group needed to include two members from 0 to 14 years of age, four between 15 and 44 years of age, two between 45 and 64 years of age, and two 65 and older. Of the 10, there needed to be five males and five females, and at least one needed to be non-white.

The writer wished the group to be as impartial as possible, and so ruled out recruiting group members from among friends, neighbors or co-workers. In order to avoid the tedious and time-consuming chore of randomly soliciting participation, perhaps through the phone book, the writer decided to utilize the services of the county's volunteer action center. This center's purpose is to match requests with people who have indicated they are willing to volunteer for a project. The implications of using a volunteer group also will be discussed in Chapter V.

The writer discussed the practicum with the director of the volunteer action center, and then submitted a request by letter. The letter asked specifically for participants according to the previously mentioned age, sex and racial breakdown. The writer and the center agreed that the center would initially ascertain participant interest, but that the writer would make the formal contact with the potential participant and determine suitability for participation. Within two weeks after sending the formal request to the center, the writer began receiving names and phone numbers of potential participants from the center. A total of 24 names were received.

The writer called each potential participant, briefly outlined the project and the need for the participant to view six TV shows. However, pertinent details regarding the show and the intent of the project were specifically withheld to avoid as much bias as possible. Some of the potential participants declined to participate. From the remaining names, the writer comprised the group according to age, sex and race. As far as possible, the writer attempted to engage group participants who lived in a variety of areas of the county.

Since many of the participants did not subscribe to cable television, the writer set up specific dates when the entire group could come together to view each show. A letter containing these dates was sent to each participant, along with the survey of awareness (see Appendix D), which members were asked to complete and bring with them to the first viewing, or to mail to the writer. Alternate arrangements were made for members who could not attend on certain dates. These arrangements ranged from viewing shows on alternate dates to viewing tapes of shows on their home video cassette recorders (VCRs). To maintain interest in viewing six shows over a long period of time, the writer arranged to serve coffee and doughnuts while shows were being viewed.

The writer also used the names of potential evaluation group participants supplied by the volunteer action center to solicit a group of five persons to provide formative evaluation. While not integral to outcome evaluation, this group of five was to view each show and to provide feedback

on a show-by-show basis (see Appendix E), so that mid-course changes could be made. This group also was made demographically representative by selecting one member who was between 0 to 14 years of age, two who were between 15 and 44, one who was 45 to 64, and one who was over 65. Two were male and three were female, and one was non-white.

Planning and Scheduling the Programs:

Before specific program topics could be planned and scheduled, it was necessary to put together the parts of the program that would be standard from show to show. These standard parts were a title for the program, a set for studio interviews, an "opening" for the show, and a format by which most shows could be planned and which viewers could come to expect. As mentioned previously, the philosophical underpinnings of this practicum were that issues relating to children and families should be placed in a context understandable by the taxpaying citizens, and that the work of the writer's Board should be highlighted through the programs it provided.

Since the show's opening depended upon the show's title, it was necessary to first determine a title for the program. Due to moderate recognition of the Board's name, as previously detailed, and due to the unwieldiness of the name, there was little thought given to using the Board's name in the show's title. Rather, it was desirable to try to indicate through the title what the show's content would be.

The writer brainstormed a list of potential show titles, with the help of the community relations assistant.

These titles were then presented to department managers for their opinions. There was no concensus on a title, although the input was helpful. The writer decided, and the Executive Director agreed, that the title "Focus on Families" best described the intent of the show and that it was versatile enough to enccmpass a variety of topics.

The next step was to design and produce the show's opening to showcase the title and introduce the show. An opening can be quite costly, especially if done by a TV production company. It's also possible to take a low-budget approach by videotaping footage and editing it together. Since an opening is used for each show, becoming the show's "signature," it should be of fairly good quality and durable. As well, an opening generally has music, and there are royalty issues that must be considered.

The writer decided to try a middle-of-the-road approach by hiring a production company to film and edit the opening and to supply background music for which royalties, if any, had already been paid. The actual opening itself was arranged by the writer and her assistant, thus cutting the cost of the production.

Several young people, representing a variety of ages, were asked to draw, paint or sketch their families. The young people were chosen from an area high school art class, from an agency funded by the writer's Board, and from one employee's family. In this manner, single-parent families, extended families, and other family constellations were represented in the finished art.

The students and their art were taken into the production company studio, where each student was videotaping signing his or her family portrait. The camera zoomed in as the student began to sign, focused on the family, then zoomed out. The footage was then edited to music at the writer's direction, with the show title and the board's name displayed at the beginning. Total running time was about one minute. The cost for the opening, about $800, was paid for by the writer's departmental budget.

The next step in planning the program was to decide the format for the show. As discussed previously in this report, the intention was to refrain from a half-hour's worth of "talking heads" - studio interviewing of one or two guests by the writer. At the same time, without a great deal of resources, some studio interviewing was inevitable. For this practicum, the studio interviews were considered a constructive way to provide the in-depth discussion of issues. So the writer decided to make a studio interview or two an integral part of the format.

The field videotaping time donated by Company A could then be put to good use to illustrate the work of the Board through its funded programs. This "package" of field video and the studio interview would center on a topic, issue or need area of importance to families, and upon which the Board has an impact.

Therefore, it was decided that the studio interview portion of the program would feature one or two persons from the community who were "experts" on the topic at hand. The

writer would interview the expert or experts to provide the county-wide perspective on the topic. Then, the field videotaped package would feature programs that operate within the topic area and which were, to the extent feasible, board-funded programs. Depending upon available time, a final studio interview between the writer and someone who has benefitted from services in the topic area would be conducted. Finally, to connect all program parts directly with the public, each show would feature man-on-the-street interviews in which people in public were randomly asked a question pertinent to the show topic. These would be edited for use at some point during the show.

Other parts of each show were to be determined as topics were scheduled, since one topic might lend itself to a special treatment that another might not. The writer also decided that the "credits," the list of writers, producers, editors and other personnel provided at the end of a show, would always include the Board's name, address and phone number along with the notation that the viewer could call or write for more information.

The remaining part of the planning process was to set up a monthly schedule for videotaping, studio interviews, editing and producing the shows. The writer decided that since each show would run on a monthly basis, editing and producing the show during the third or fourth week of each month would permit maximum planning and videotaping time at the beginning of the month.

In terms of topics, it seemed natural to start out by showcasing the writer's organization. In order not to sacrifice spontaneity, a list of possible show topics was developed for subsequent months. Some topics were timely, others could run in any month. All topics were chosen from among the 17 need areas designated by the Board in varying priorities. For the second month, the topic was child care. This program also featured a segment on the Earned Income Credit, which the board actively promotes. The third show was planned to expand on the child care show by featuring specialized child care. This show also featured a segment promoting Child Abuse Prevention month. The fourth show was about children and death, the fifth about community partnership projects in which the writer's organization is involved, and the sixth about the writer's Board's budget and funding process, since the Board was preparing to hold public hearings on a millage increase.

Production:

For each show, the writer first had to decide what facts should be covered in each show and what topics were relevant to the issue to be featured. Statistics and needed research were obtained. Then, the writer discussed with her assistant what needed to be covered in the show and how coverage might best be provided. Since the assistant had a background in TV production, she was able to interpret the writer's intent in videotape format. The assistant also offered a great deal of creative input into the show, often

suggesting such embellishments as an illustrated poem on the featured topic.

Once there was a show skeleton (see Appendix F) in place, the next step was to determine the appropriate people to serve as guests for the studio interview(s), and to schedule them accordingly. Maps showing the location of the cable company were included with confirming letters to studio guests. Contents of the field package also had to be determined, and pertinent parties notified of taping dates, which had to coincide with the cable company's scheduled shooting dates. Any videotaping that would involve minors or that might present confidentiality issues required signed consent prior to filming. The writer's assistant had to tentatively script the field package at the writer's direction. The writer had to develop questions for studio interviews and write the introduction, closing and other verbal portions that she would use while in the studio.

Once videotaping in the field was completed, it was necessary to "log" the tapes, which meant viewing them to determine what portions would be used, then preparing a final script with the logged portions noted. The field package would then be compiled for use with the studio taped portions of the program.

Logistically, it became clear that many different parties would need to be synchronized carefully in order to get the proper footage needed for a show. The limitations to field videotaping became immediately apparent since the film crew was available for only four hours' worth of taping, and

since desired packages could involve taping at several locations, some separated by as much as a 45-minute drive.

Production on the first show commenced by scheduling dates for Cable Company A to videotape in the field, in this case primarily at the writer's organization, and to videotape in the company's studio and edit the final production. Since this was the first time the writer and her assistant had worked with the company's videographers, it was not known whether their capabilities and the writer's wishes would mesh. It turned out that the videographers moved at a much slower pace than expected. Although desired field footage was obtained, it required using the videographers past the time allotted by the company.

Since studio interviews taped at the cable company are "live to tape," i.e., cannot be edited once completed, the next step in the process was to edit the field video into the featured package. This segment would then be edited together with the studio interviews for the finished program. Editing of the field package proved to be tedious and time consuming. Because it required most of the editing time provided by the cable company, the feature package editing was somewhat stressful to the writer, who was left in the position of conducting an "all or nothing" interview on tape in the little time remaining for studio interviews.

Based upon this initial experience, the writer decided to make some changes in how succeeding shows would be produced. To allow the flexibility and time needed for field videotaping, the writer decided to pursue purchase of a

high-quality super VHS camcorder so that her department could secure its own footage without the cable company's crew. A super VHS camcorder was compatible with the cable company's editing equipment and provided good quality video at a cost higher than a regular camcorder, but not prohibitive. The Executive Director agreed to the expenditure. Since the four hours donated for field taping would not be used for that purpose, the cable company agreed to transfer that amount of time into studio and editing time.

Therefore, the arrangement ended up being one where the writer's department was responsible for all field videotaping, which provided the needed flexibility in terms of travel time and which permitted consideration of the diverse schedules of those who were to be taped for each show. Since editing and studio time was nearly doubled, there was now adequate time for editing the package before the studio interview(s) needed to be conducted. This change in production was in place by the third show. Although the purchased camcorder was not delivered in time for the second or third shows, arrangements were made with the county government access channel to borrow a camcorder for field taping use until the purchased camcorder was delivered.

Once in place, the new procedure meant that the writer was still responsible for overall show theme and content, but that she directed her assistant, who knew how to operate a camcorder, to secure the necessary field videotape. The assistant also was directed to secure the "man-on-the-

street" interviews for which the public was asked a question pertinent to each show's topic. While this appeared to be a time-saving plan, in reality it did not work well. It was difficult for the assistant to set up and run the camcorder while conducting an interview at the same time. Interview subjects tended to move out of optimum camcorder framing once the assistant began the interview. Since this writer did not see all footage being shot, she did not have a complete understanding of what each show would look like until studio editing time. Then, it was late in the process to make changes or improvements.

Consequently, the writer made more changes in procedures so that she would travel into the field with the assistant and conduct on-site interviews while the assistant videotaped. Because she was now aware of who and what was being filmed early on, she was able to make interim changes and to enhance continuity between the field package and her own studio interviews, which were conducted as the last step of each program's production.

Other specific changes from program to program were suggested by the group of five citizens who agreed to fill out forms (see Appendix E) for that purpose. One change was suggested by a 13-year-old member of the group, who wanted interviews with youth about each topic. Subsequently, the writer made certain to include a young person in the man-on-the-street interviews whenever possible, and to interview young people in the studio, especially those who benefitted from services provided by the writer's Board. A non-white

member of the group suggested inclusion of minorities in the man-on-the-street interviews. The writer actively solicited minority participation for subsequent shows. Another group member suggested including phone numbers of featured agencies during the course of the show, rather than combining these numbers at the end of the show. This suggestion was implemented in subsequent shows.

Other Factors Affecting Action Taken:

The portfolio kept by the writer was helpful in collecting events, activities and other factors that occurred during practicum implementation, but which do not fit neatly into one subheading or into the provided chronology.

One event, which will be analyzed further in Chapter V, is that the program ended up being broadcast more frequently than initially expected. Cable Company A, which was expected to air the program once a week, decided to air the show twice a week, once on Thursday mornings and again on Friday evenings. Cable Company B also decided to air the show twice a week, once on Monday evenings and once on Thursday evenings. When the county public information director reviewed the show for airing, she decided to direct her government access channel to air the program three times daily. The government access channel is carried by both cable companies. This meant that each show produced for one-month's airing was aired at least three times daily throughout the county, and on some days in certain parts of the county, four times a day.

Since the writer's county is part of a regional metropolitan area, many residents work in neighboring counties. For that reason, it was decided to secure placement of the show on a neighboring cable company's public access channel. This was easily accomplished when an employee who lives in the county in which the other cable company is located agreed to serve as the conduit for placement. Consequently, up to 45,000 more viewers were able to see the show. While not all these viewers live in the writer's county, some may work here and some may be residents who live here but who work in the neighboring county.

To reach those who did not subscribe to cable television, and to promote use of the writer's Board's library of print and video materials related to children and families, the writer arranged to purchase a small video cassette player for placement in the organization's lobby. Many members of the public waited here for service by the organization or by any of the three other agencies located within the building. As well, people attending training at the building had to pass through the lobby. Show tapes, as well as other relevant materials from the library, were played throughout the day. A small sign was placed on top of the VCR alerting viewers to the availability of the tapes in the library for checkout. Many people were observed watching the tapes in the lobby and many did, in fact, check out tapes for viewing at home.

The writer's anecdotal log also included many names of people who reported seeing the show, or who reported to other employees, family members or persons portrayed on the program that they had seen the program. These names, along with reported viewing times, were noted on an average of two a week. The collection was considered complete when the writer bumped into a man who had been taped several months before for a man-on-the-street interview. He told the writer he could not believe the number of people who told him they had seen him on the show.

In contrast, only one or two contacts resulted from placement of the organization's name, address and phone number at the end of the show. The writer decided to actively solicit input and, during the fifth show, verbally requested viewers to call or write. No contacts were received.

Within the government/educational/public access environment, the show was well-received. One producer of government access programming took the time to address a letter to the writer complimenting her on the show. The third show won a first-place in government access programming during the sixth annual community access achievement awards sponsored by Cable Company B. When the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) learned of the program, it published a small report on the show ("Taking to the Airwaves," 1992, p. 24). All of these events were unexpected, but welcomed.

One other factor bears noting. During most of the programming completed for this practicum, the studio set consisted of furniture supplied by the cable company. To personalize it, the writer displayed an organizational banner behind the set and within view of the cameras, and placed a small statue of a child on the set coffee table. The furniture supplied by the cable company was used by others filming in the studio. It was neither distinctive to the writer's program nor particularly attractive.

The writer and her assistant began searching for creative yet inexpensive ways to spruce up the set and make it distinctive. Only a few phone calls yielded monthly donations of flower arrangements from two floral companies, and a semi-permanent loan of wing chair, loveseat, coffee table and plant stand from a furniture company. A major chain department store sent a $100 check for set decorating.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The problem to be addressed by this practicum was poor awareness among county residents of youth and family issues, in general, and the work of the writer's Board, in particular. The goal of this practicum was to improve the awareness through a public access, cable television program produced by the writer. Three outcomes were expected from this practicum. Results will be given for each outcome in the order in which the outcomes were presented in the report.

Outcome 1

The first outcome expected from this project was: A larger proportion of the county population will receive information on the writer's Board and on the needs of the county's children and families. Outcome 1 was to be considered accomplished by routine exposure - defined as weekly - of an audience of up to 50,000 county residents to information about the writer's Board and about the needs of the county's children and families. This outcome was met.

The first part of the outcome relating to routine exposure can be considered more than met since the writer's cable TV program was placed for airing three times daily by

the government access channel of both cable companies, and twice weekly on the local origination channels of both cable companies. As well, the program was aired weekly by a neighboring county's cable company.

Documentation of an audience size of up to 50,000 county residents was much harder to determine. While broadcast television uses Nielsen and Arbitron ratings to determine who is watching what program and when, these ratings are not used in cable television. As mentioned in Chapter IV, surveys of cable TV viewership are paid for by the various cable companies, and are the property of the companies. Neither cable company locally has conducted viewership surveys (Terry Zurowski, personal conversation, 17 June 1992).

Therefore, the second half of Outcome 1 was estimated in terms of potential audiences reached, using research by Atkin and LaRose (1988). Their survey of respondents drawn from a systematic sample of 100 cable systems throughout the country showed that 16% of the overall audience reported viewing a community channel within the past week. Applying the 16% figure to the nearly 237,000 households who subscribed to the two cable companies serving the writer's county yielded a potential audience of 37,920.

While this number is less than 50,000, the projected outcome was for "up to 50,000" county residents to receive information about the writer's Board. It also is important to note Atkin's and LaRose's (1988) caution that the cable viewing percentage level should be considered in light of

seasonal viewing fluctuations, and that public access programming has increased in popularity since the study was conducted in 1985-86.

Since the practicum was intended to improve awareness and ameliorate a no-taxes mentality, it seemed worthwhile to further delineate the nature of the potential audience reached. Table 1 provides demographic translation of subscriber households into potential public access viewership.

Compared to non-cable homes within the county, cable homes: 1) reach a median age that is closer to the median age of all county residents (Adair, 1990); 2) represent a large proportion of employed people who are likely to pay taxes; and 3) represent a larger average household size than non-cable homes, which means potentially more viewers might watch a program.

TABLE 1

Demographic comparison of cable subscribers and non-cable subscribers in county
N = 237,000

	CABLE HOMES WITHIN COUNTY	NON-CABLE HOMES WITHIN COUNTY
AGE		
18-34 years	31%	20%
35-49	26%	16%
50-64	24%	25%
65+	19%	58%
Median Household Age	46	58
INCOME		
$20,000-$30,000	27%	19%
$30,000-$39,000	22%	11%
$40,000+	26%	20%
EMPLOYMENT		
Employed	70%	49%
Retired	25%	44%
EDUCATION		
Less than high school	9%	18%
Some college	30%	27%
College graduate	29%	24%
RESIDENCE		
Premanent residents	94%	88%
Resident 2 years or less	13%	15%
Resident 11 years or more	51%	50%
Own home	79%	71%
Median residence in years	11	11
HOUSEHOLDS		
One person	14%	39%
Two persons	37%	37%
Three or more	24%	12%
1 or more children under 18	25%	12%
Average household size	2.7	2

Note. The data in this table were supplied by the St. Petersburg Times. Used by permission.

Outcome 2

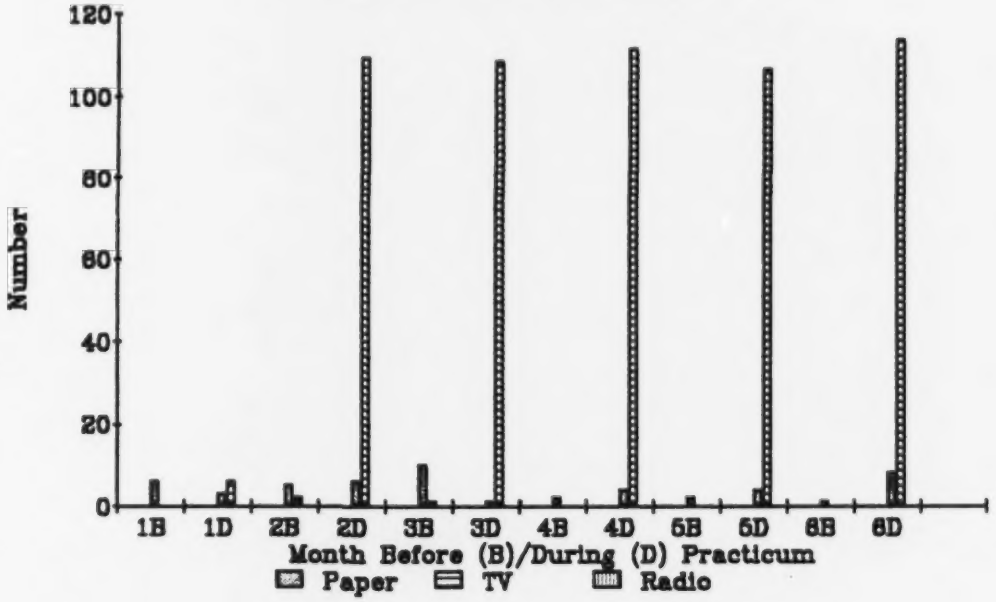
The second outcome expected from this practicum was: The Board will serve as a catalyst for increasing awareness of its work and of issues involving children and families. Outcome 2 was to be considered accomplished when a comparison of the amount of media exposure during the practicum implementation period to the amount of media exposure in the same period prior to implementation revealed an increase of 10 per month in the number of times the Board was mentioned. This outcome was met and exceeded.

For this practicum, a "media mention" was considered to be the name of the writer's organization either printed or verbalized within a newspaper article or TV or radio program. Since most media mentions involve naming the organization more than once, the writer decided that, for comparison purposes, any newspaper story or radio or TV feature on the Board would be considered one mention, regardless of how many times the organization's name was used. This criteria was applied to the practicum solution, which was a writer-produced, cable TV program. Even though each program contained a minimum of four "mentions" - during the opening, the close, and the writer's verbalized welcome and goodbye - and generally more than that during the course of each show, only one "mention" was counted for each time one show aired.

Figure 1 provides a comparison of media mentions in the six months prior to production of a cable TV show to the six

months in which a cable TV show was produced for this practicum.

FIGURE 1
Comparison of Media Mentions



Except for the first comparison months, media mentions increased by at least 100 per month. The first comparison months would have shown similar results except that placement of the TV program on government access did not occur until the second month of program production. This is because the first program began airing mid-month, and government access preferred to begin airing the program for a full month's worth of time.

Outcome 3

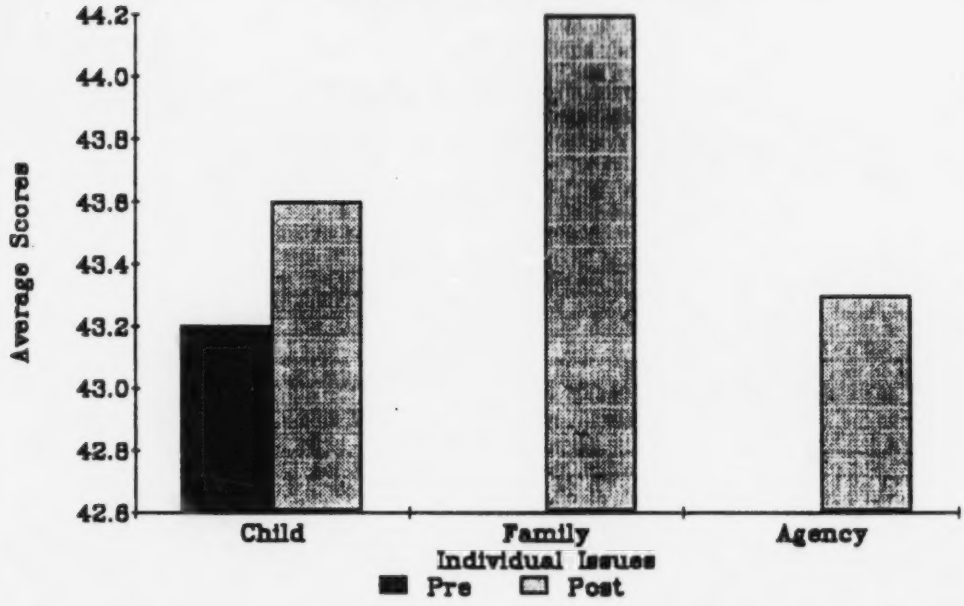
The third outcome expected from this practicum was: Awareness of youth and family issues, and of the Board's work, will be improved through implementation of a public

information method that devotes a significant amount of time to issues over a sustained period of time, defined as the duration of this practicum. Outcome 3 was to be considered accomplished by 50% improvement in the self-report scores of awareness of youth and family issues by 10 citizens who are demographically representative of the county's population. This outcome was not met, although average individual and overall scores did improve.

The citizen group awareness survey (see Appendix D) attempted to measure awareness of issues relating to children, issues relating to families, and issues relating to the Board. As mentioned in Chapter III, the survey used by the writer was based upon work by Nowak and Salmon (1987). Individual issues scores could range from 10 to 50, with 50 being the highest and most desirable; overall scores on all three issues could range from 30 to 150, with 150 being the highest and most desirable.

Individual issues scores on the pre-test ranged from a low of 14 to a high of 50, and on post-test from a low of 24 to a high of 50. Figure 2 presents average pre- and post-test scores on each issue measured.

FIGURE 2
Comparison of Average Scores



Improvement in average individual issue scores ranged from very slight (children's issues) to 3.6% (family issues). The average overall score (all issues) increased from 128.4 on pre-test to 131.1 on post-test, which represents a 2% improvement in scores.

Five of the 10 participants showed improved scores from pre- to post-test on issues relating to children, four showed improved scores on issues relating to families, and seven showed improved scores on issues relating to the writer's Board. Three participants showed declining scores from pre- to post-test on issues relating to children, one showed a declining score from pre- to post-test on issues relating to families, and two showed declining scores from pre- to post-test on issues relating to the writer's Board.

Discussion

Outcome 1 was achieved, with one part met and exceeded. It was gratifying to the writer that the program designed for this practicum received such frequent airing. This frequency helped provide the organizational visibility that Harrison (1991) believes is so imperative to creating and maintaining public awareness of an organization's work. As well, repeated airings of each program permitted one theme - each month's topic - to be reinforced over a period of time. This reinforcement is viewed by Rouner and Camden (1990) as crucial to an effective public relations program of work.

Since the topic and content of each program remained in the writer's control, each airing reinforced the intended message instead of leaving it at the mercy of a reporter's interpretation or TV or radio's 10-second sound bite requirements. However, each message is only effective when it reaches the intended audience.

For this reason, the writer would have preferred being able to concretely document the audience for the program. Results of the second part of Outcome 1 would seem to indicate that a significant number of people did view the program. Certainly the writer's anecdotal information indicated wide viewership for the program. But without costly evaluation measures, determining who watched the program and when was not possible.

Such information could be helpful in terms of optimum placement of the show for airing and for further refinement

of the message to target specific audiences. As well, detailed evaluation measures could reveal overlap among the media, i.e., who watches cable TV and reads newspapers and listens to the radio. Detailed information such as this permits fine-tuning of a public relations strategy. Media overlap can then be accounted for and used to advantage.

Most importantly, accomplishment of this outcome satisfied one recommendation from a Board marketing survey ("Community Awareness," 1987). The recommendation called for market development strategies to inform new audiences, and market penetration strategies to emphasize the same message to the same audience.

Achievement of Outcome 2 provides evidence of the writer's organization serving as a catalyst for increasing awareness of its work and of issues involving children and families. This outcome called for an increase of 10 per month in the number of media mentions generated by the writer. In fact, the increase was 10 times that, or more than 100 more media mentions per month. Even this number pales when actual mentions per show are counted. While only one media mention was counted for each show, generally the Board was mentioned four or more times per show.

The dramatic increase in mentions is a direct indication of the Board's serving as a catalyst for increasing awareness. If the writer, on behalf of the Board, had not initiated the routine cable TV program, the increased number of mentions would not have occurred. Media mentions provide one type of feedback on media efforts.

Joslyn-Scherer (1980) advocates a three-part evaluation for human service media efforts. The three parts she has called "input" (how well is the organization reaching out to the media?), "thruput" (what are the results of organizational efforts?) and "output" (is public awareness improved and is there a change in attitude toward the organization?). Brawley (1983) views achievement of media mentions as fulfilling input and thruput evaluations. He believes keeping media mention records provides useful information about media coverage and the opportunity for adapting techniques, if necessary. Outcome 3 was designed to address the output part of Joslyn-Scherer's (1980) evaluative process. The results of Outcome 2 provide input and thruput and dramatically illustrate the opportunity for increasing media exposure via cable TV.

The writer would be remiss not to point out that each opportunity for media exposure via the cable TV program was also an opportunity for the viewer to receive an in-depth discussion of the issue, something that had been lacking in the Board's Community Relations efforts to date. The expansive media exposure also addressed the limited dissemination of information experienced up to this point.

Outcome 3 attempted to determine changes in awareness of youth and family issues, and of the Board's work, over the period of the practicum. Results fell considerably short of the projected 50% improvement in overall scores, showing instead a 2% improvement. While on the surface this may appear to be cause for some dismay, the writer believes even

the slight improvement shown demonstrates that it is possible to affect awareness with a cable TV program.

The writer suggests that results may have been more dramatic if a random sample of participants could have been used. Participants in this project were volunteers. While much of educational research depends upon volunteers, volunteers tend to be better educated, more intelligent and of a higher social class than non-volunteers (Borg, 1987). This may have meant that the volunteers used for this practicum displayed higher scores on pre-test than a random sample of volunteers would. Therefore, improvement from pre-test to post-test would be less dramatic.

An impartial evaluator in impartial circumstances also might have improved scores. The writer initiated and maintained contact with evaluation group members, and also appeared on the TV programs the participants viewed. The participants may have been less favorably disposed to the programs because they may have believed the writer wanted a positive outcome, even though the writer kept all personal contacts and directions as neutral as possible.

Worth noting is that more participants showed improved scores from pre- to post-test than declining scores. Of the improved scores, there were more (seven) shown for the issue relating to the writer's agency than for issues relating to children or issues relating to families. The reader will recall from Chapter II that poor awareness of the Board's work was a particular problem. It would appear that

awareness of the Board can be improved greatly through a cable TV show.

Another factor affecting interpretation of the results of Outcome 3 is the inherent difficulty of changing awareness, especially in a short period of time. Much of the research used for this practicum contained that message in some fashion or another. Melton and Stineman Schroeder (1992), in discussing the impact of social issue television programming, indicate that there is little empirical evidence about the longterm impact of such coverage. Over the short term, they believe that such programming demonstrates the power of TV to influence attitudes and behaviors.

In this regard, it was helpful to examine the information provided by the five-participant citizen group which was asked for monthly feedback (see Appendix E) on programs. One question asked how much of the information presented in the program was new to the viewer. Except for one participant and one show, participants indicated that "most" or "some" of the content of the programs was new. As various authors have pointed out, viewers first must have information before they can act upon it or change their behavior as a result of it.

Finally, while not an official part of the outcomes, it was gratifying to receive an award for the third show, judged by others involved in public/government access television within the county. This judgment reflects the quality of the program as determined by those who know the

time, energy and effort needed to produce such programming on an ongoing basis. It also was gratifying to be mentioned in the national publication of the Child Welfare League of America ("Taking to the airwaves," 1992, p. 24), and to receive frequent comments from the public about having seen the program.

In summary, accomplishment of two out of three outcomes, and slight improvement on the third, means that human service organizations and governmental bodies such as the writer's can successfully engage in the medium of access cable TV. With frequent airing of reasoned issues, exposure can be increased for the individual agency and for issues which the agency espouses. This exposure can help inform people and, perhaps, increase their awareness of the importance of such issues to themselves and to others.

Recommendations

The writer heartily recommends use of a cable TV show to augment and improve a public information program. With this format, a lot of creativity and very little money can result in promotion of names and issues to a wide population, many of whom may not use other media. For audiences who do use a variety of media, a cable TV program provides the opportunity to expand upon intended messages and reinforce such messages.

The value of doing so may be dependent upon the ability to influence attitudes. For this reason, the writer recommends that others wanting to replicate this project

might wish to explore other, perhaps more definitive methods of determining changes in awareness. Perhaps a community, service or educational group could undertake evaluation methods that reach a random, and larger, sample than that used in this practicum. Results obtained in this manner would provide routinized feedback on program content and intent. A structured focus group might be another way of obtaining pertinent, ongoing feedback.

The writer also recommends exploration of methods for receiving input from casual viewers who are not part of a specific evaluation plan. Although the TV program credits asked for comments at the end of each show, and even though the writer verbally asked for comments during one show, there was little input from viewers as a result. The writer thinks such communication could be a valuable tool for informing the public and for learning from them.

Others who wish to engage in access TV programming also would be advised to consider all possible applications of such programming. For example, parts of one program could later be edited into an instructional video. In this manner, the investment of time needed to produce a program pays off larger dividends than just one program.

Dissemination

The nature of this practicum has been information dissemination. Therefore, it is likely that information about this method of information dissemination will, itself, be disseminated. Already, as mentioned, the Child Welfare

League of America has reported about the writer's work. The writer also presented information about the project at the annual conference of the state Children's Services Council, as part of her seminar presentation on marketing social services. The writer intends to continue disseminating information about the project at appropriate professional conferences and meetings.

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APPENDIX A

MISSION STATEMENT/FUNCTION ASSIGNMENTS

Mission Statements and Function Assignments
Board of County

PROGRAMS AND FINANCE

FUNDING AND EVALUATION

MISSION: To allocate fiscal resources through individual service provider contracts and execute and manage service contracts to assure maximum efficiency, effectiveness and accountability through active review, monitoring and evaluation processes.

FUNCTIONS:

1. Application and grant review
2. Contracting
3. Grants management
4. Funded agency liaison
5. Monitoring
6. Evaluation
7. Performance management information systems
8. Agency technical assistance – programs and evaluation

FINANCE

MISSION: To assure administration of fiscal resources consistent with state and federal statutes and regulations and Board policies and procedures; and to provide efficient and effective support services to community agencies to enable them to accomplish their programmatic and administrative objectives in a timely and responsive fashion.

FUNCTIONS:

1. Financial planning
2. Accounting
3. Audit
4. Internal audit
5. Purchasing
6. Fiscal monitoring
7. Agency technical assistance – finance

SYSTEMS/SUPPORT

MISSION: To assure administration of physical and human resources consistent with state and federal statutes and regulations and Board policies and procedures; to provide efficient and effective support services to other departments to enable them to accomplish their administrative objectives in a timely and responsive fashion; and to better enable community agencies to undertake such administrative and operational functions.

FUNCTIONS:

1. Personnel administration
2. Affirmative action
3. Leasing
4. Secretarial support
5. Central files
6. Building/facility management
7. Insurance
8. Risk management
9. Communications
10. Data processing
11. Central Testing (Operations)
12. Agency technical assistance – administration

COMMUNITY SERVICES

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

MISSION: To undertake community planning, service coordination and technical assistance activities necessary to develop supportive public social policy, plan an effective funding program, and design and implement an efficient and effective service delivery system to meet the needs of children in County.

FUNCTIONS:

1. Community research/data base
2. Needs assessment
3. Community planning/problem solving
4. Research/development
5. Special projects
6. Annual plans
7. Multi-year plans
8. Resource allocation
9. Resource development
10. Intergovernmental relations – program liaison
11. Agency technical assistance – program development

TRAINING CENTER

MISSION: To increase the productivity and effectiveness of personnel involved in the support and provision of human services by assessing training needs, planning, coordinating, delivering and sponsoring, independently or in cooperation with other community bodies, staff development activities; directing staff and career development activities; and maintaining a human services library and audiovisual center.

FUNCTIONS:

1. Training needs assessments
2. Human service conferences
3. Library and audiovisual center
4. staff and board orientation
5. staff career development
6. staff development
7. Agency technical assistance – staff development

YOUTH SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEES

MISSION: To provide a structure for the Board to educate the community about the needs of children; obtain public input for its plans and policies; and expand public and agency participation in information sharing, community problem solving, policy development and service coordination activities.

FUNCTIONS:

1. Family and children's services coordination
2. Community involvement
3. Advocacy on behalf of children and families
4. Enhanced community awareness

SPECIAL ASSISTANT

MISSION: To advocate for supportive public social policy and maintain intergovernmental relations conducive to promoting the welfare of children and families.

FUNCTIONS:

1. Public policy monitoring
2. Advocacy on behalf of children and families
3. Public Policy Committee
4. Intergovernmental relations
5. Intern placement
6. Special assignments

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

MISSION: To promote broad public understanding and awareness of the needs of children and the purpose, function and activities of the Board.

FUNCTIONS:

1. Public information and education
2. Volunteer coordination
3. Speaker's bureau
4. Agency technical assistance – public relations

APPENDIX B

COMMUNITY RELATIONS STRATEGIC PLAN

COMMUNITY RELATIONS STRATEGIC PLAN

August, 1991

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE:

The Board Community Relations Department is in the unique position of being able to examine its direction in light of the successful Sept. 4, 1990 Children's Services Referendum. The increased millage and new programming resulting from voter approval of this referendum demand increased accountability to the citizens, as well as expanded public information performance by the Community Relations Department.

Rather than move into uncharted areas in a haphazard manner, or in an "it's always been done this way" mode, Community Relations undertook strategic planning to provide a guide to its future activities and endeavors. This strategic plan is the result of three months' work by a committee composed of the Community Relations Specialist, the Special Assistant, the Librarian, a Program Consultant II in the Community Services Department, and a Program Consultant II in the Training Department. The plan was completed using the strategic planning process discussed by John M. Bryson in his book, Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations. The planning process included study of the existing Mission Statements and legislative mandates; identification of individuals and groups with an interest in the Board and the Community Relations Department; an analysis of the department's strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats; discussion of issues facing the department over the next several years; and brainstorming for strategies that effectively respond to the issues.

The results of the planning, presented in this document, should serve to position the Board as an authority on issues relating to children and families in , and to continue 's long history of responsiveness and accountability to the citizens of

Community Relations has, over the past several years, shifted the focus of the department from one of strictly media relations to one of provision of information to a variety of publics, and it envisions maintaining this broadened focus. Community Relations wishes to place its information in context, so that each of its publics is able to find meaning within the message. In this manner, understanding of the issues related to children and families will be fostered, and this understanding will result in improved and enhanced lives. Ultimately, Community Relations hopes all recipients of information will become advocates for children and families, for it is through informed action that change occurs.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Community Relations Department is to promote broad public understanding and awareness of the needs of children, and the purpose, function and activities of the Board.

Board Mission Statement

The Community Relations Department, as all departments within the Board, exists to serve the public. The people of have long supported the Board, and reaffirmed that support through approval of a referendum to increase the Board's taxing authority. How the continues to meet the needs of the community determines, to a large extent, the character of the community - its priorities and standards, its conscience and human dignity.

The people of County provide the financial support and encouragement that make effective services through the Board possible. They have a right to know, through all media and informational channels, how the carries out its duties and responsibilities. The Board will not have the support deserved as dedicated public servants unless County is fully aware of the issues the faces and how it deals with them from day to day. The Community Relations Department's primary responsibility, and privilege, is facilitating the public's right to be informed.

Information empowers people. For citizens, information allows them to make reasoned, responsible decisions regarding the provision of human services through tax dollars. For consumers of those services, information permits throughtful, effective choice. Information assists the agencies with whom the Board contracts to serve their community competently. Information supplies the news media with the stethoscope to monitor the community's heartbeat. Finally, information empowers the employees of the Board to serve, individually and collectively, as the Board's best public relations representatives.

The Community Relations Department exists to provide the information needed by all of these "publics" in a format or formats appropriate to each. The Community Relations Department utilizes appropriate news media and other informational channels to disseminate information. It strives for accountability, accuracy and timeliness, focusing proactively rather than responding reactively. The Community Relations Department is sensitive to the unique needs of each public and attempts fully, honestly and creatively to address those needs.

MANDATES:

The mandates for the Board are specified in Chapter 23,483, Special Acts of 1945, as amended in 1947, 1949, 1955, 1961, 1965, 1970 and 1979. This legislation specifies the powers and duties of the Board in terms of services offered to and available for children, as well as collection of statistical and informational data, consultation with other agencies, and financial practices. Within the legislation, there is no specific mandate for community relations. In practice, the role of the Community Relations department has come to be one of media relations focused on communicating the needs of children and families in County, promotion of the Board, enhancement of community awareness regarding the Board, and publication of -sponsored services and special events.

STATEMENTS OF INTENT:

The order of appearance of the following statements of intent does not imply their relative importance. Rather, the statements are interdependent upon one other.

The Community Relations Department is instrumental in informing the public of issues related to specifically, and to children in general. The intent is to maintain 's history of accountability for use of tax dollars so that the community can be confident it is a partner in providing worthwhile services.

The Community Relations Department is instrumental in informing funded agencies, committees and the Board of issues related to specifically, and to children in general. The intent is to maintain ongoing and open lines of communication.

The Community Relations Department is instrumental in informing the news media of issues related to specifically, and to children in general. The intent is to foster, through regular news media coverage, an understanding of human services and the unique way in which delivers those services in County.

The Community Relations Department is instrumental in informing staff of issues related to specifically, and to children in general. The intent is to assist employees to realize their roles as public relations representatives of .

GOALS AND ACTIONS:

GOAL: TO MAINTAIN JWB ACCOUNTABILITY FOR USE OF TAX DOLLARS SO THAT THE COMMUNITY CAN BE CONFIDENT IT IS A PARTNER IN PROVIDING WORTHWHILE SERVICES.

Community Relations Actions to be Taken:

* The Community Relations department will engage in regular, public dissemination of written information, especially in the areas of budget, programming, efficacy of efforts, and human interest activities.
* Community Relations will utilize emerging and existing technology, broadcast media and other public information systems, such as a telephone answering/message system, to report publicly on actions and activities.
* Community Relations will use appropriate public events to portray actions and activities.
* Community Relations will endeavor to identify, through signage and/or explanatory material, the individual departments and functions of to foster public understanding of the various facets of the Board.
* Community Relations will maintain a Community Relations Advisory Committee comprised of citizens and public relations professionals who will meet no less than once a quarter.
* Community Relations will facilitate ongoing evaluation of 's logo, name,

slogan and written materials so that its public visual presentation is consistent with its philosophy and activities.

* Community Relations will respond quickly and completely to requests for information, and maintain a systematic method of accommodating requests made to people or departments other than Community Relations.

* Community Relations will maintain a speaker's bureau of trained employees equipped with creative materials, and actively solicit public speaking engagements.

* Community Relations will endeavor to explain children's issues, funding sources and related matters in contexts that facilitate understanding of activities among the public.

Examples of activities:

* Consider a version of the annual report designed to reach the majority of the public, as opposed to specific audiences. Possibilities include publication in a newspaper or direct mail to homes of taxpayers.
* Strengthen the Speaker's Bureau by making it a group of trained, volunteer employees, and examining the existing process. Consider a combo video/information kit/gimmick package that would be available for use by speakers.
* Pursue a TV show on cable television.
* Capitalize on I-COPE for providing information on .
* Install a "message" phone system so that callers who must be put on hold receive a message about children's issues or .
* Provide social indicator data, a Q&A column or some sort of routine publication to the media. This activity should be done in conjunction with the appropriate department(s).
* Solicit a TV "buy-in" promotion for the 50-year celebration.
* Provide information to newcomers.
* Look at successful organizations, e.g., All Children's Hospital, for clues to their success.
* Focus on what we really do - research, training for continuing education, money saved by volunteers, donations received, donations of employees to others - when writing for the annual report and other documents. This serves two functions: readers get current information via research, etc., and they come to view as "people" rather than a "place."
* Change the logo of the Board, develop a slogan that says what we do, and explore a possible name change. Appropriate times for "unveiling" the new logo would be upon moving elsewhere, or at the 50th anniversary celebration.
* Design the public reception area to indicate who we are and what we do. There should be some sort of display of our history, and something providing a sense that we are here for children and families. Individual departments also should be identified, along with a brief description of what they do.
* Engage in appropriate public information campaigns, such as the Earned Income Credit campaign, to promote the and to assist County citizens in areas important to family functioning.

GOAL: TO MAINTAIN ONGOING AND OPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATION WITH FUNDED AGENCIES, COMMITTEES AND BOARD MEMBERS.

Community Relations Actions to be Taken:

* Community Relations will maintain routine communication with and facilitate exchange of information with the Board, funded agencies and committees, using available technology where appropriate.
* Community Relations will make at least one visit a year to each of the committees to assist them in their work.
* Community Relations will endeavor to recognize publicly, whenever possible and appropriate, the work of Board members, committee members and employees of funded agencies and the agencies themselves.
* Community Relations will provide technical assistance to permit the Board, committee members and funded agencies to effectively perform their jobs or functions.

Examples of activities:

* Mail the renovated Friday Flash on a regular basis to funded agencies and the Board.
* Provide routine presentations to the employees of our funded agencies, highlighting one or two topics of current interest.
* Consider consolidating mailings from so that agencies are not inundated with separate mailings. Where appropriate, consolidated mailings could be done at time of mailing the Board packets.
* Explore ways to improve the volunteer coordinator function that exists within Community Relations. The goal is better coordination across all departments of committee volunteers, volunteers from the Volunteer Action Center, etc. Consider utilizing volunteer coordinator function as the "broker" for volunteers, linking the volunteer pool to all departments via computer data base. Establish a mechanism for formal recognition of volunteers' efforts, as well as recognition of volunteer efforts of the employees.

GOAL: TO FOSTER UNDERSTANDING, THROUGH NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE, OF HUMAN SERVICES AND THE UNIQUE WAY IN WHICH JWB DELIVERS THOSE SERVICES IN COUNTY.

Community Relations Actions to be Taken:

* Community Relations will cultivate and maintain contacts with area broadcast and print media, and respond quickly and thoroughly to requests.
* Community Relations will utilize current and emerging technology, such as cable television, to disseminate information, as well as using news releases for distribution of information to all media at the same time.
* Community Relations will promote the work of -funded agencies to the media, and refer specific media inquiries to the appropriate agencies when necessary.
* Community Relations will attempt not only to inform area media of specific news items, but also educate them as to the county's human needs and the services

that meet those needs.

* Community Relations will capitalize on human services stories of national interest by providing area media with the local aspect of the national story.

Examples of activities:

* Continue present practice: news releases, phone contacts, ready accessibility, promotion of agencies, promotion of , public information, etc. This is an area of Community Relations that currently functions very well, and requires maintenance of successful effort.

GOAL: TO ASSIST EMPLOYEES TO REALIZE THEIR ROLES AS PUBLIC RELATIONS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BOARD.

Community Relations Actions to be Taken:

* Community Relations maintain close coordination and communication with Personnel to provide materials and information so that each new employee is welcomed thoughtfully and thoroughly to .

* Community Relations will maintain a regular channel of information for employees about children's issues and also about accomplishments and activities of employees and the .

* Community Relations will take an active role in, encourage and facilitate internal exchange of information among employees and departments, as well as promote organization-wide activities such as the United Way campaign.

* Community Relations will provide technical assistance to help employees effectively perform and communicate their job responsibilities.

Examples of Activities:

* Develop and maintain a new-employee information kit to include information about as well as "warm fuzzies" such as the new employee's nametag, business cards, etc. Activity coordinated with Personnel.
* Assist with installation and maintenance of an employee photo/name board and Board photo/name board in a central location. Activity coordinated with Personnel.
* Renovate the Friday Flash into a more professional, informational publication. This might contain a feature on an employee, feature on a Board member, highlights of employees' professional/volunteer experience and expertise, information on activities of various departments.
* Utilize the computer to provide employees with information on children in general, in particular.
* Initiate separate employee communications for CCC, MFC and the License Board. This could begin with separate sections within the Friday Flash until they are ready to take on their own communications.
* Assist Personnel with instituting and continuing Board recognition of longterm employees and employees' accomplishments.

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APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY RELATIONS MEDIA POLICY

BOARD OF COUNTY

MEDIA POLICY

The Board ( ) of County is an independent, special taxing district that plans, coordinates, funds and evaluates services to children and families throughout County. It was created by state statute and its activities are supported by the tax dollars of citizens. Its functions fall under the Government in the Sunshine Law, and all records are available to the public.

A carefully planned and implemented policy governing interaction with the print and electronic media is, therefore, imperative. A consistent, harmonious relationship with members of the media is an integral part of the foundation for community awareness of the purpose and activities of the Board, whose services and activities potentially impact every child and family in County.

The objectives of a mutually beneficial relationship between the Board and the media (local, state and national) are to:

1. Communicate the needs of children and families in County.

2. Promote an awareness and understanding of the Board, its history and the services provided to children and families by its funded agencies and programs.

3. Provide reliable, accurate and timely information, whether requested by the media or initiated by , in a brief, clear format, with sensitivity to media requirements, preferences and deadlines.

4. Enhance the community's awareness of 's staff expertise, experience and materials as available resources in media requests for information, news stories, features and events.

5. Publicize -sponsored services and special events.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF 'S
COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIRECTOR

The Community Relations Director, with the assistance of the Community Relations Specialist, coordinates the agency's overall public and media relations strategy. The Community Relations Director is not necessarily the source of all media information, but coordinates and monitors the dispersal of all information to assure accomplishment of agency objectives, and complete and accurate dissemination of them to the media.

To accomplish the objectives above, the following media relations policies and procedures have been established.

-INITIATED CONTACTS WITH THE MEDIA

POLICY:

1. The Board will strive to keep the media aware of issues of importance through an organized public relations plan of action coordinated by the Community Relations Director.

PROCEDURES:

1. All department-generated media interaction, such as news releases, feature stories or press conferences, must be reviewed with the Community Relations Director before media contact is made. In most cases, media contact will be made by the Community Relations Director. In some cases, media contact may be made by someone within the department requesting the contact. In all cases, the Community Relations Director will either approve the proposed activity or refer it to the Executive Director for approval before release to the media.

2. Whether news releases are developed by the Community Relations Director or by a department manager, they must be routed to the originator and to the Executive Director for approval before release to the media.

3. News releases or media contacts which involve interpretation of Board policy or decisions must be released or made under the contact name of the Executive Director and/or the Board Chairperson. Other releases may be disseminated under the contact name of the Community Relations Director or other staff, as appropriate to be determined by the Community Relations Director and the Executive Director.

MEDIA-INITIATED CONTACTS WITH _____

POLICIES:

1 All staff persons should consider themselves potential spokespersons to the media and should become familiar with the Annual Report and other Community Relations materials describing the goals and activities of the Board. No staff person should feel compelled to speak to the media if he/she prefers not to do so.

2. Each staff person should strive for honest, factual communication with the media, free of personal opinion, without repeating hearsay or discussing information or issues with which the staff person is not familiar.

3. staff persons must guard against potential misrepresentation or misinformation in dealing with the media, as any statement made is subject to publication or broadcast.

4. No staff person shall knowingly make statements of opinion or interpretation to the media which could misrepresent or cause embarrassment to the Board, Executive Director or other staff, or that could reflect negatively on the agency or its integrity and role in the community.

5. Members of the media have full access at all times to records and files. As detailed in the Public Records Law, may expect media access to records and files to be done in a reasonable manner, which includes adequate and timely notification of desired access, and of files and records to be accessed.

PROCEDURES:

1. General inquiries from the media shall be referred to the Community Relations Director, who will either:

   a. respond to the media request directly.

   b. research requested information and inform the media as quickly as possible.

   c. refer media representative to the specific staff person or other individual who is knowledgeable about the subject.

2. If a staff person is contacted directly, he or she may discuss the issue raised by the media representative(s) if:

   a. that staff member is knowledgeable about the subject and considers it his or her area of expertise.

   b. the staff person feels comfortable in dealing with the media.

   c. the issue is not sensitive, controversial or otherwise a potentially difficult publicity situation. Sensitive, controversial or otherwise potentially difficult publicity situation might include: one in which there has been negative public response or where negative public response might be anticipated; one in which there has been negative media coverage or such coverage might be anticipated; one involving an agency in which there are current contract, evaluation or performance investigations; issues involving lengthy Board debate without clear consensus; issues involving current or potential litigation; issues of a partisan, political nature.

3. After a staff member has relayed any information to the media, he or she should contact the Community Relations Director with summary data regarding the media inquiry, information relayed and follow-up arrangements or requirements, if any. A form for this purpose is provided in Appendix 1.

4. If a staff person is contacted directly by the media regarding a sensitive or potentially sensitive situation, the Community Relations Director and the Executive Director should be informed immediately. If that staff person previously has been authorized by the Executive Director, Community Relations Director or the staff member's department director to make a statement or discuss a sensitive topic with the media, s/he should inform both the Community Relations and the Executive Director as soon as possible after the media contact.

5. Any staff person contacted by the media about a specific issue or situation who feels that s/he is not authorized or is not knowledgeable enough to address the topic should refer the contact to:

   a. his/her department manager

   b. the Community Relations Director

   c. the Executive Director

6. At no time shall any staff person guarantee any media representative exclusive rights to any information or material without first consulting the Community Relations Director and/or the Executive Director.

7. Requests for access by the media to records and files should be referred to the Executive Director or the Community Relations Director.

8. Certain situations may result in the designation of a single spokesperson to represent the agency and respond to the media.

Appendix 1

Date:

TO: Executive Director
Community Relations Director

FROM:

SUBJECT: MEDIA CONTACT

Media Calling: _____

Date/Time: _____

Staff Person Contacted: _____

Request Inquiry: _____

_____

_____

_____

Referred to: _____

Results if applicable:

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX D

SURVEY OF AWARENESS OF YOUTH/FAMILY ISSUES AND AWARENESS OF BOARD

INSTRUCTIONS

The purpose of this questionnaire is to measure your opinions on three social issues. You will be given a series of adjectives about each issue; please indicate how you feel about each one.

EXAMPLE: If you feel that the item given is very closely related to one end of the scale, you should place your checkmark as follows:

IMPORTANT ____ :___ :___ :___ : X__ UNIMPORTANT

If you feel that the item given is related to one end of the scale, you should place your checkmark as follows:

IMPORTANT ____ : X :___ :___ :____ UNIMPORTANT

If you feel that the item given is not related to one end of the scale or the other, you should place your checkmark as follows:

IMPORTANT ____ :___ : X :___ :____ UNIMPORTANT

IMPORTANT:

1. Be sure you check every scale for every issue; do not omit any items.

2. Never put more than one checkmark on a single scale.

3. Answer each item separately and independently. Do not worry or puzzle over individual items. It is your first impression that is desired.

4. Be honest. All answers will be kept completely confidential.

Issues relating to children are ...

Important	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Unimportant
Of no concern	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Of concern
Irrelevant	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Relevant
Very meaningful to me	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Of no meaning to me
Trivial	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Fundamental
Worth considering	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Not worth considering
Interesting	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Not interesting
Significant	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Insignificant
Vital	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Superflous
Boring	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Exciting

Issues relating to families are ...

Important	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Unimportant
Of no concern	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Of concern
Irrelevant	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Relevant
Very meaningful to me	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Of no meaning to me
Trivial	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Fundamental
Worth considering	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Not worth considering
Interesting	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Not interesting
Significant	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Insignificant
Vital	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Superflous
Boring	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Exciting

****MORE ON NEXT PAGE****

The issue of the Board as it involves funding services to children and families with tax dollars is ...

Important	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Unimportant
Of no concern	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Of concern
Irrelevant	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Relevant
Very meaningful to me	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Of no meaning to me
Trivial	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Fundamental
Worth considering	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Not worth considering
Interesting	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Not interesting
Significant	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Insignificant
Vital	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Superflous
Boring	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Exciting

****THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!****

APPENDIX E

MONTHLY INTERIM FEEDBACK REPORT FORM

INSTRUCTIONS

The purpose of this form is to get your opinions on the program you have just seen/media report you have just read. Please answer the questions below. You may refer to the program/media report as you consider your response, if you wish.

1. In your own words, what would you say is the purpose of the program/media report?

2. How much of the information presented in the program/report was new to you?

Most of it _____ Some of it _____ None _____

3. Do you have questions about the program/report topic that were *not* answered in the program/report?

Yes _____ No _____
If yes, please list:

4. Was there anything you particularly *liked* about the program/report?

Yes _____ No _____
If yes, what?

5. Was there anything you particularly *disliked* about the program/report, or anything you found confusing?

Yes _____ No _____
If yes, what?

6. This program/report is most appropriate for (check all that apply):

General public	_____	College graduates	_____
Professionals	_____	Retirees	_____
Young people	_____	Don't know	_____

7. Would you recommend this program/report to a friend or family member?

Yes _____ No _____
Please tell us why or why not:

8. The following are a series of phrases describing the program/report. Please circle the *one* choice on each line that most closely reflects *your opinion*:

a. very interesting	somewhat interesting	not at all interesting
b. very informative	somewhat informative	not informative
c. accurate	partially accurate	inaccurate
d. very clear	somewhat clear	confusing
e. very useful	somewhat useful	not useful
f. easy to view/read	understandable	hard to understand
g. complete	somewhat complete	incomplete

9. Would you like to say anything else about the program/report? Please comment:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you very much for your help in reviewing this program/report!

APPENDIX F

TYPICAL PROGRAM FORMAT

TYPICAL PROGRAM FORMAT

Program Opening

Man-on-the-Street Interviews

Studio Interview

Field-Taped Feature Package

Second Studio Interview

Closing